

IN THE ABSTRACT

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A retractable propulsion system for a vessel has an engine (2) mounted within the hull (1; 101) with a drive shaft connected through a universal joint (6) to a propeller shaft (3; 103), supported so that it can rotate and slide in a bearing (7; 105) at a point close to the propeller (4; 104). The bearing (7; 105) is articulated at one end of an extension-retraction mechanism (8, 9; 110, 115, 116, 118) through which the propeller shaft can be placed in a first operating position outside the hull or a second retracted position in a housing (11, 12; 102, 111) in the hull with a door (13, 13'; 15). A device for actuating, guiding and locking this system has a pair of upper arms (118, 118') and a pair of lower arms (110, 110') forming an articulated parallelogram (118, 118'; 110, 110'). The device of articulated arms (118, 118'; 10, 110') is locked in the operating position when the upper arms (118, 118') are in an over-centering position once the lateral members (121, 121') have been coupled to fixing members (113, 113').